

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 077911
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN:LPFEIFLE:LM
APPROVED BY ARA:TATODMAN

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S/S-O:RCASTRODALE

-----000166 252042Z /62

O R 252028Z MAR 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL BELIZE IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

S E C R E T STATE 077911

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:

TAGS: PBOR, GT, UK, BH

SUBJECT: PREMIER PRICE'S CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY

1. ON MARCH 24 PRICE TOLD THE SECRETARY THAT BELIZE COULD NOT CEDE TERRITORY BUT WAS PREPARED TO OFFER GUATEMALA AN ADJUSTMENT OF THE MARITIME BOUNDARIES WHICH WOULD PERMIT FREE ACCESS TO THE BAY OF AMATIQUE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 077911

BELIZE FACES A DILEMMA; IT CAN NOT ACCEPT THE BRITISH PROPOSAL TO CEDE LAND AND THE STATUS QUO WOULD BE DIFFICULT BECAUSE GUATEMALA WOULD SUBVERT BELIZE OVER TIME. THUS, THE COMMONWEALTH CARRIBEAN COUNTRIES MEETING RECENTLY IN BELIZE DECIDED ON A MULTILATERAL SECURITY GUARANTEE. PRICE ALLEGED HE DISCUSSED THE IDEA WITH THE BRITISH WHO DID NOT OBJECT TO HIM PURSUING IT. IN ADDITION, PRICE CLAIMED THE

BRITISH SAID THEY WOULD TAKE PART IF A SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRY JOINED THE SCHEME. PRICE SAID THAT BARBADOS, JAMAICA AND GUYANA HAD AGREED TO PARTICIPATE. HE ALSO HAD OBTAINED THE AGREEMENT OF PANAMA BUT WAS KEEPING IT SECRET FOR THE TIME BEING. BASED ON THAT PARTICIPATION HE WAS COUNTING ON THE BRITISH TAKING PART ALSO. IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE PANAMANIAN PARTICIPATION ALONG WITH THE CARIBBEAN COMMONWEALTH, HE WAS CONSIDERING USING THE U.N. UMBRELLA.

2. VENEZUELA'S PEREZ TRIED TO CONVINCE HIM TO ACCEPT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH TERRITORIAL CESSION. PEREZ TOLD HIM "IT WOULD BE INTERESTING" IF CANADA AGREED TO JOIN THE SECURITY GUARANTEE, AND THIS HAS LED PRICE TO HOPE VENEZUELA WOULD PARTICIPATE IF CANADA DOES.

3. PRICE ASKED THE SECRETARY FOR U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE SECURITY GUARANTEE AND THE SECRETARY MADE NO COMMENT. THE SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD BE TALKING TO THE BRITISH AND THE VENEZUELAN. HE ALSO STATED THAT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WAS CERTAINLY A PREFERABLE SOLUTION. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN POINTED OUT THAT GUATEMALA WAS VERY FIRM THAT IF THERE WERE UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE IT WOULD TAKE MILITARY ACTION.

4. IN A DISCUSSION AFTER THE MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY,
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 077911

TODMAN ASKED PRICE WHY HE DID NOT TALK WITH GUATEMALAN VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT, VILLAGRAN KRAMER, SINCE PRICE HAD NOT MET HIM BEFORE. PRICE THOUGHT THAT WAS A GOOD IDEA AND MADE NOTE OF IT.

5. AFTER THE MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, PRICE TOLD WAITING NEWSMEN THAT THE PURPOSE OF HIS MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY WAS TO EXPLAIN HIS PLAN FOR A MULTILATERAL SECURITY GUARANTEE, AND THAT BARBADOS, JAMAICA, GUYANA, GREAT BRITAIN AND ONE SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRY HAD AGREED TO TAKE PART. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CESSION, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE077911
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LPFEIFLE:LM
Enclosure: DC ADJUSTED PER CHICHESTER/PFEIFLE TELCON
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780132-0305
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780324/aaaaafl.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: dccf12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3201304
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PREMIER PRICE'S CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY
TAGS: PBOR, PDEV, GT, UK, BH, US, (VANCE, CYRUS R), (PRICE, GEORGE C)
To: GUATEMALA LONDON MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dccf12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014